

21st October, 2019.

Hon Alan Tudge MP
Minister for Population, Cities & Urban Infrastructure,
Electorate Office,
420 Burwood Highway,
Level 1, Suite 4,
WANTIRNA SOUTH, VIC., 3152.

Dear Alan,

Re: Anti-Poverty Week Campaign - Raise the Rate

Newstart is not working and with the increasing rents and cost of daily living, we are seeing more and more people attending Knox Infolink for emergency relief support. Anti Poverty Week, 13-19 October, drew our attention to the issues of poverty and the concerns that we are unable to break the cycle of deprivation, social isolation and humiliation.

It is a basic human right to have food and shelter but access to affordable housing is getting further out of reach for many and the humiliation of having to rely on emergency relief to feed the family is demoralising and the longer the cycle continues the harder it is to break.

'Just get a Job' can be an easy catch cry, but if you are spending all your energy trying to feed your family, going from one charity to another to save your limited cash to pay the increasing rent, there is little time to focus on limited employment opportunities, particularly if you cannot maintain credit on your phone, put fuel in your car to get to appointments, or pay for public transport. The cycle of struggle, disappointment and lack of adequate income to pay the bills comes with depression and other mental health issues. We must break the cycle and provide a basic income that is adequate to survive on, so that individuals and families can focus on more than just survival. Ultimately, this will be better for the economy as this will be income that goes directly back into the economy purchasing food and essentials.

With median rents in Boronia of \$350 per week for an average 2 bedroom unit, Newstart at \$545 per fortnight does not come close to paying the rent. People are forced into share accommodation that is often undesirable and unstable, ending up in homelessness and so the cycle continues. Once homeless, the options are even more limited and finding employment almost impossible when you have no fixed address and you cannot attend to basic hygiene. We must stop the cycle of poverty and give hope to people.

Attached is a signed petition to '**Raise Newstart by at least \$75 per week**', we ask you to share with your colleagues the urgency of this situation.

Yours sincerely,



DENISE BUDGE
CENTRE MANAGER